

**I would like to provide a testimonial to the 2011 Legislative Committees working on defining the Medical Marijuana Law that was passed by the voters of Montana.**

**I am a 59 year old woman who is handicapped after suffering with Rheumatoid Arthritis for 24 years. I have compressed discs in my back due to prescription meds that I have taken over the years for my arthritis. I am taking diuretics and blood-thinners for other medical issues. I am unable to travel any distance by car because of my back pain and the need for easy access to bathroom facilities.**

**I have been in some pretty intense pain in the past few months and I dislike the idea of taking prescription pain pills since I do not like the fact that I have a hangover effect the next morning from these meds and I am concerned about adding more prescription drugs to the many that I am forced to take for my current health problems. I had been considering medical marijuana as an alternative to helping with my pain and to help me to be able to relax enough to sleep.**

**In talking with my now medical marijuana caregiver, I found that I would have to be able to travel to the Hamilton or Missoula area to attend an appointment with a doctor willing to qualify people for medical marijuana use. Physically, I am not capable of making a 6 to 9 hour trip to either of these areas for an appointment. It was then that she told me that she could possibly set up an appointment for me to meet with a doctor via Skype on the internet. After arranging for my medical records to be sent to this doctor for his review, my caregiver set up a Skype appointment for me to interview with Dr. Richter.**

**I was impressed with the fact that this doctor had reviewed my records. He discussed my current meds and health issues. He also discussed the type of marijuana product that he felt would be the best product for me to use. Since I still sometimes use tobacco products, he told me that the best marijuana product for me to use would be the tinctures or the edible products. He told me that smoking the product would be too hard on my lungs. He encouraged me to stop smoking tobacco products and suggested a**

prescription medication to help with that process. I actually felt quite good about my Skype appointment with Dr. Richter.

I would hope that the Legislative Committee working on revamping the Medical Marijuana Laws would continue to allow Skype Interviews for folks like myself who are unable to travel to meet with doctors willing to prescribe medical marijuana. Even traditional medical facilities are using the internet to connect smaller communities to larger hospitals.

I am looking forward to trying medical marijuana as soon as I receive my card from the State of Montana. I have never tried marijuana or other nonprescription drugs because of my life's profession. I never would have thought six months prior to my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, I would be willing to try marijuana to ease my physical pain. Extreme physical pain will encourage a person to seek relief wherever they can!

I have not included my name to protect my right to privacy. If you have any questions, you may contact my caregiver, Ms. Tawnya LaFond at 406-490-4273.